342 after a day or two the stone-and-mud walls have dried to the same appearance of timeless indestructibility as those of fifty or one hundred years ago. We passed first, as always, through a small byre, not yet inhabited by its cow; then at right angles through a dark, narrow passage 5 or 6 feet long, and then through the low hall-door into the house itself. Your main object in building a house at all is to be as warm and free from draughts as possible during the "Great Cold," and no one in his senses would let his hall-door open straight on to the wind-swept mountain side. Hence the byre ante-room, which not only defeats the direct outside air, but contributes something of animal warmth to the human warmth within.

291 281 352 When we emerged into the living-room (the *atrium*, as it were), beautifully bright with light from the smoke-hole, we were standing in a shallow trough below the floor level where the newcomer kicks off his muddy boots in winter. Most people at all well-to-do wear soft home-made boots up to their knees in winter-time. But skins are precious and, however cold the weather, they take their boots *off* to save them when they come to an extra rough bit of ground. This entrance place has in it the "musicians' bench," under which are stored the family basin and similar utensils and on which is piled a store of firewood.

342 [352] The floor of the room is a small square of hard-beaten earth which in this gloriously dry climate remains admirably clean; and roughly in the centre of it is a shallow hole, edged with four stone kerbs, which is the hearth. Behind the hearth is a low bench sacred to the lady of the house, the presiding genius 343 of indoors. Beside it she sits to do or superintend the cooking 251 and behind her is a low wooden door opening into the store-[414] room; the home-made wooden key of which hangs always on her person. The store-room runs the whole width and height of the house. It has need to be a roomy place, for here stand the skin sacks of grain, the heaped baskets of potatoes, apples, dried mulberries and apricots, the kernels, the wool, the stone wine-jars, the jars of apricot oil, the basket of savoury herbs—all the family's supplies for a twelvemonth, which it is her duty to guard and to apportion.

326 tion of these unusual people stirred up an interest within
533 me, and I wanted to know more about them. I found
563 very little data could be obtained from any of the books I had been able to read on the subject.

[173] But after much discourse and questioning, I learned what I had begun to suspect . . . that the Bericho were actually gypsies who had come to India more than 2,000 years ago. From India, as good gypsies would do, they fanned out to spread themselves in small groups over the entire country . . . some ultimately settling in Baltistan, from whence a colony were sent off to Hunza.

Their place of abode is actually a village known as Berishal. It is a known fact that the people of Hunza depend entirely upon the Bericho for their iron-mongering and their tool-smithing and their music-making.

I was very happy to have unearthed this information so I can pass it along to my readers.

[871] These Berichos used to send their children out of
[167] Hunza to be educated and the Mir told me that he had to put a stop to this practice . . . not because he objected to the children of the Bericho being educated, but because the children did not return or remain with the trade of their parents. As the Mir's country needed artisans of this type, he had to put a stop to their sending their children elsewhere for education.

The Mir went on to tell me how important these Berichos were to the community. They fashioned farm
[414] implements as well as hardware like hinges, latches, razors and many other essential farm and household necessities that are fashioned from metal. Besides making the implements of peace, the blacksmith could also fashion a shotgun barrel.

[651] He further mentioned that each household in the community pays a small tithe as a contribution to-